

MVP: Munger Tolles' Rose Leda Ehler

By Dorothy Atkins

Law360 (October 15, 2020, 4:38 PM EDT) -- Rose Leda Ehler of Munger Tolles & Olson LLP secured a \$62.4 million damages award on behalf of major movie studios against VidAngel Inc. for infringing hundreds of copyrights, earning her a spot as one of Law360's 2020 Media & Entertainment MVPs.

HER BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THIS YEAR:

Ehler said her biggest accomplishment was securing a \$62.4 million trial victory on behalf of Walt Disney, Lucas Film Ltd., Twentieth Century Fox, Warner Bros., Marvel, New Line and Turner Entertainment against VidAngel and beating VidAngel's multiple post-trial motions challenging the verdict.

The studios accused the movie-filtering service of willfully pirating iconic movies like "Star Wars," "Harry Potter" and "The Wizard of Oz," and the jury sided with the studios.

"It was one of the largest per-work statutory damages award at the time, which has since become a really important precedent for cases like these that aren't going to make it to jury," she said.

Ehler explained that the case helps resolve similar disputes in the early stages of litigation and lets companies know that if they litigate these cases, they're not going to win.

"It's really nice to achieve quick results for your clients," she added.

HER BIGGEST CHALLENGE THIS YEAR:

Ehler said a really interesting challenge that came out of the VidAngel verdict has been litigating claims against VidAngel in bankruptcy court.

The company filed for Chapter 11 in 2017 after the Ninth Circuit affirmed a ruling shutting the service down, and in September, VidAngel said it cut a deal to pay the studios \$9.9 million and drop its Ninth Circuit appeal of the verdict.



"I'm a copyright and entertainment lawyer so I had to get up to speed really quickly on bankruptcy court procedure and case law," she said.

Ehler noted that clients want to have a team working on these cases, so she partnered with bankruptcy lawyers at the firm and worked closely together.

"Learning a whole new world of bankruptcy law was certainly not something I anticipated, but we were all pursuing the same goal, and it is not a bad skill to have given the state of the world," she said.

HER PROUDEST MOMENT THIS YEAR:

Ehler said she's proud of the work she and others have done on police reform efforts. That team formed a task force to combat racial injustices in May and they have been working since the summer to develop a more external-facing initiative that will play out in the courts.

"I'm really proud of work that the team has been doing to advance racial justice," she said. "It's different from the media and entertainment practice, but I think it aligns with what our clients care about. It feels good to be a part of that."

WHAT MOTIVATES HER:

Ehler said she likes contributing to the entertainment industry even though most of the work she does for clients is "very much behind the scenes." From a business perspective, she said there's a lot happening right now in the entertainment industry as it evolves along with the technology. Everything is new and different, particularly with streaming services becoming the main way viewers consume content these days, she said.

"There's a lot that's changing and it will continue to change," Ehler said. "It keeps the practice new and different."

HER ADVICE FOR JUNIOR ATTORNEYS:

Ehler touted the benefits of being team-minded in her approach to problem solving.

"The idea that we work better and achieve more as a team together than any one person can accomplish individually is really true and that includes the clients," she said. "Clients are the most important members of the team."

Ehler also emphasized that junior attorneys can learn a lot from co-workers, noting that her Munger Tolles colleagues Glenn Pomerantz and Kelly Klaus have been good mentors and great friends over the years.

"Working alongside them can really be fun, and I think collaborative teamwork makes everybody a better lawyer," she said.

— *As told to Dorothy Atkins*

Law360's MVPs are attorneys who have distinguished themselves from their peers over the past year through high-stakes litigation, record-breaking deals and complex global matters. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2020 MVP winners after reviewing more than 900 submissions.